Depot Town Rag

March 1988

FREE 100% RAG CONTENT

A PUBLICATION OF THE DEPOT TOWN ASSOCIATION, INC. The Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198

More progress on the depot

February saw a massive hole appear in the trackside roof of the MCRR depot's main section and, before the month was done, a concrete block pylon began to rise in that space. The future tower, intended to give the now-horizontal profile of the building some contrast, will provide a suitable exclamation point to one of our community's saddest focal points.

Scan the historic photographs above the front window tables at The Sidetrack and see the interim tower this one will replicate. It's been a naked expanse since the train wreck of 1939. Welcome back.

Although the past two month's issues of *The Rag* have carried up-dates and progress reports of the depot, no one has yet set a deadline date for the completion of a restaurant at that key location.

Depot Town's most-watched pot may soon begin to boil.

". . . at the depot." Ypsilanti's most distinctive address since 1832

They didn't always call it Depot Town. Older City directories, newspaper advertisements and high school yearbook sponsorships simply stated they were "at the depot." More modern developments have gone on to describe out-lying shopping malls as 'centers', but the real centers are still here. Depot Town proves it. Downtown is experiencing it again. Why, even University Village (formerly Campus Town, formerly West Cross Street) is planning a St. Patrick's Day parade. Welcome back to the center of things.

The Commercial Italianate Architectural Style -In Ypsilanti's Nineteenth Century Depot Town

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Final Jazz Concert in the Winter Series

Saturday, March 19, 1988

7 p.m. - Popular Demand loves sweet soul music — the sweetest sounds of the '50's, done the right way, *a capella,* in four-part harmony.

8 p.m. - Russell Green Quintet, Green, dean of Detroit's trumpet players, mastered growl trumpet while working for the Jimmy Lunceford's big band. He's still a most engaging player and bandleader, as his appearance at the Montreux/Detroit Trumpet Summit proved. His Montreux/Detroit band — Pistol Allen, Lefty Edwards and Jeff Halsey — will re-create a festival highlight, full of high-stepping, bluesy swing music.

10 p.m. - The Regular Boys play sweet soul music. Four horns, a funky rhythm section and a strong lead singer revive the classic rhythm and blues of Otis Redding, Sam and Dave, Booker T. and other giants of the '60s and '70s. Dancers find them irrisistible.

Part Three: Cast Iron Usage in Facade Construction

The Iron Horse, Men of Iron & Iron Buildings

When the builders of Depot Town's third generation of buildings installed these Commercial Italianate structures, they certainly didn't want to have the first-floor-fronts look like the Italian princes' palaces they had replicated on the upper stories. These were commercial properties and they had to cater to the retail trade. If the first floors had the subtle closures of the previously purloined palace designs, how would the customers ever find their way inside to buy anything?

It was the iron monsters of the Industrial Revolution that saved the day and brought open, light, airy store windows we see today. Thin, pre-cast, iron columns would hold up much more weight than a brick wall of the same dimension. (Actually, the original windows looked more like those replicated on Depot Exchange and Shankwiler's Artrain Building, since the others still carry the 1920-50's 'remuddling' with larger expanses of plate

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(Cont'd from page one)

glass.) Iron steps, window sills and window caps could do the same thing. And this was long before the invention of 'Rustoleum!'

If they could build boilers and lay tracks clear across the country, why couldn't they lessen the need for all that brick bulk in the buildings with *iron* columns? Iron would be fire-proof, rattle-proof and strong. It could be easily poured into any number of ancient classical designs to complement the designs already borrowed from other historical periods. And, best of all, it could be cast in the same foundries that made the locomotives and rails, and shipped via those same products to the newly rising rail towns across the nation. Builders of the day could bolt them together, as in the steel girder skyscraper construction of an architectural age yet to come, or they could be mortared in just like brick and terracotta.

The span of bays from the Sidetrack, Depot Exchange, the Artrain building, Big Bob's, River Art Works and to Hon's Flowers exhibits a fine example of iron columns, interspersed with a brick one now and then, to aid in the 'party wall,' a pre-building code idea that's still a good one. Put a solid brick wall — not pierced by doors or windows —between neighbors and you'll keep their houses fire-controlled. These have been practical property boundaries, too.

Peddler's Path and Miller's Ice Cream certainly had cast iron columns, but, if they're still there, they're carefully covered up under that Z-brick. A fancy column marks the turn into Ike's Barbershop. At Vintage Passion, someone tore the cast iron all out a few years ago and it's probably buried somewhere in the block. (Can you set the depth on those metal detectors?)

Nope! We fooled you. That's not an iron window cap above Hansen's Standard Printing. That's stamped metal, much like furnace sheet metal or tin ceilings. The original cornice here, was made of stamped metal, also. They probably didn't really have to tear it down, after all, Aubree's, however, shows iron columns, but a wooden cornice.

Just a few years ago, one of the block's basements still had the cast iron artichokes which adorned the drops on the window caps along Cross Street's south side. They're probably turned into lamps, door stops or anchors by now.

Follett House sports cast iron, not only in the columns holding up the top floors from the sidewalk, but in the window caps from Paponetti's, the Treasure Chest, The Cricket Box, Our Little Secret, Depot Doo and Jim MacDonald's/Apple Annie's.

Iron ornamentation is subtle, but plentiful on the block, today. Look for a hula girl cast into a few of our columns in Depot Town. You'll also find bouquets of iron flowers and tiny oval frames suitable for holding the visage of Jenny Lind, the Swedish Nightingale or Sarah Bernhardt. These iron ladies appeared in this district, too.

(Photos by Carolyn McKeever)

Ike's Depot
Town Barbershop
40 East Cross • 483-6300

With such iron edifices beginning with columns set in concrete and brick at the ground level, is it any wonder how compatible these buildings have proven to be with all that iron hurtling by on iron rails at the crossing? Who minds a few missing artichokes?

Another hint at architectural iron usage ought to be mentioned here: Have you ever noticed those little iron starts or 'S' brackets bolted to the sides of older brick buildings? These are braces screwed in to keep the freezing and thawing brick walls from bulging too far out. When we were kids, someone convinced us that these were eighty-foot-long screws that went clear through the buildings and came out the other side. But we're older now, and most of us saw them put new ones into the walls above Apple Annie's/Jim MacDonald's last year. They are only about four feet long and fasten to the floor joints just the other side of the exterior wall. The outside washers, in this case, were made from cast iron 'broadcasters' from a farmer's seeding machine.

Get out on the street. Rubber neck. Don't worry about being mistaken for a tourist. They're having all the fun, anyway. Look around at all the wonderful Victorian junk that's still left down here. Feel it. But don't taste it. You remember what happened when you put your tongue on the swing set? *(Pump handle* for the older readers.) Same thing with cast iron. Aw, go ahead. Try it, kid.

Next month we'll be looking at the cornice designs from the past and present.

Depot Doo
Fine Design in Hair Style
25 East Cross • 484-3045

Ted's Auto Electric
307 North River • 483-1238

The Cricket Box
19 East Cross Street
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198
(313) 487-5595

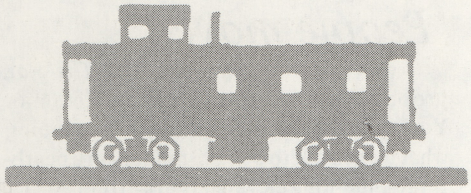
Our Little Secret
Resale Clothing & Other Niceties
23 East Cross

Thompson Building Mall
Over 4000 square feet of dealers
412 North River • 484-4288

WE love to **BUY ANTIQUES**
DEPOT EXCHANGE ANTIQUES
54 E Cross. • 482-1780
Next to Sidetrack
Professional Stripping & Refinishing

Old Town Restaurant
Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
38 East Cross

Cross Street Antiques
33 East Cross



D.T.A. 18 February 1988

Announcements

D.T.A. retains copyright on The Depot Town Rag ($10.00 fee)

21 January minutes approved as published

Treasury

General	1977.50
Merchants	1574.90
Rag	(1983.30)
Hallowe'en	(283.57)
Caboose	25.00
Jazz	5826.12
TOTAL	$7136.65

Treasurer, Judy monaghan noted that Jazz total does not take into account E.M.U. share of profit or all in-coming jazz bills.

Standing Committees:

Membership/volunteerism: Bonni Rosen is making efficiency a priority in processing membership checks through a better record keeping system.

DTA will be reviewing its constitution at next month's meeting, March 17th.

Caboose:

A motion was passed to contract Randy Carpenter to complete painting and repair of the caboose interior. DTA agreed to supply all materials. A cleaner and brighter caboose will rent at the same low rates of $25.00 per event w/ a $10.00 key deposit. Contact Gary McKeever @ 483-4256.

NIFTY (New Initiative For Tourism in Ypsilanti):

Upon further exploration, Jake Guter reported that existing Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) grant programs do not look promising for Depot Town due to strong competition by full-time grant-seekers.

Budget/Events:

Carolyn McKeever reported that last month's jazz concert was a success and all was in readiness for February 20th's new show.

A motion was made and passed to sign a contract with Nashville's Billy Walker, reserving May 28th for two shows at the Freight House. (See related article)

2nd Vice Presidents:

Merchants Committee - The installation of lights in our town will conclude this summer.

Artists & Artisans - are organizing a protest regarding possible deceit and fraud in the handling of a so-called juried art show at the 1987 Heritage Festival. Not only was their own integrity maligned in the planning and execution of the event, but the show was improperly advertised and presented to possible exhibitors. Talks continue.

Antique Dealers: a request for an antique bottle and glass show has come for the Dealers to field to the Freight House.

Engineering Society - Anyone with jobs undone, contact the Engineering Society - kids who want to work - @ The Old Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, 48198.

Antique Engine Club - The monthly newsletter is out and a meeting is scheduled for 2/25, all before a three-day train trip to Toronto. Enjoy!

Other Business:

Jake Guter reviewed Farmers' Market rental agreement for future action.

Best Yet Award:

Jack Miller's continued public relations program. Nice show on Detroit TV and on the back page of The Detroit Free Press. Jack's efforts pay off for the good of the whole district.

The Golden Goose Award

Snow removal in our backyard — and those who get in the way of it.

Acting Workshop

Do you enjoy performing with your community theater group? Would you like to be a better actor, but don't quite know how? Would you like to be more comfortable with "cold readings" at auditions? The Ypsilanti Players are sponsoring a workshop for amateurs who would like to improve their acting skills. This five-session workshop will acquaint you with the technique of Michael Shurtleff, a nationally known acting teacher and casting director. All participants will perform scenes at the workshop, taking part in discussions afterwards.

The workshop fee of $20.00 includes your copy of *The Actors Scene book*. There will be five class sessions, beginning with a registration/orientation meeting on Monday, March 14 at 7 p.m. The workshop will then meet for two Wednesdays (March 14 and 24) from 7 p.m. until 10 p.m., and two Saturdays (March 19 and 26) from 1 p.m. until 5 p.m. Participants must be willing to spend time outside of class to rehearse!

Workshop leader Teddy Ostrow studied with Michael Shurtleff this past year. She has acted with the Greenfield Village Theatre Company, Nancy Gurwin Productions, The Black Sheep Theatre and Ann Arbor Civic Theatre. She has directed for the Ypsilanti Players and the Junior Theatre Company, and taught for Young People's Theatre of Ann Arbor. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Michigan.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL TEDDY OSTROW AT 769-3072 OR THADA LISKOW AT 434-3289.

March 1988

for the good of the block
in the Old Caboose unless noted:

Foundation
8:00 p.m. Thursday 3/2

Artists & Artisans
7:30 p.m. Monday 3/7

Association
7:30 p.m. Thursday 3/17

Antique Engine Club
7:30 p.m. Thursday 3/24
t.b.a.

Antique Dealers
6:05 p.m. every Tuesday
Old Town Restaurant

Rag thanks: to all who have recently updated their loyal sponsorships of this little monthly. New spaces are available at $10 per month for Depot Town enterprises wishing to support the district's publication.

THE DEPOT TOWN RAG:

A publication of the Depot Town Association, Inc., a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to preserving the unique character of the neighborhood and to the enhancement of its business climate.

The Depot Town Association, Inc.,
Tom Dodd, President
The Caboose, 400 Market Place
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198

Standard Printing Company
35 E. Cross Street
Ypsilanti, MI 48198
483-0339

Patronize The Merchants That Bring You The

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Depot Town Rag

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Memorial Day weekend should be an exciting time for Ypsilanti's historic Depot Town —

☐ The Norman Rockwell-like parade will again see patriotic veterans' organizations and colorful bands stop for a brief service on the Cross Street Bridge. They will then pass through the railroad district on their way to more complete memorial services at Highland Cemetery.

☐ The Depot Town Antique Engine Club will follow that annual Monday event with their second annual Tail Gate Swap Meet in the Farmers' Market Plaza on the north side of the district.

☐ and, new this year, will be DTA's first venture into country music promotions — starting off the weekend at the Freight House, Saturday, May 28:

YPSI OPRY

— featuring Nashville's Billy Walker and the Tennessee Walkers. Walker and his nationally famous act will be at the top of the bill for the program described as a 'country classics concert." Walker is one of the original Grand Ol' opry stars, dating from the early days of stellar performances of the likes of Hank Williams, Kitty Welles, Marty Robbins, and the rest.

Growing from Saturday morning music sessions at the Farmers' Market coffee shop, the Ypsi Opry concept originated with market manager Gary Urick, who lined up still more local musicians to discuss such a possible project. Out of this association came Dale Richards, an Ypsilanti country kid who was once married to Nashville star, Pasty Cline. Even cool Depot Town jazz mavens recognized Cline's name and music — and Dale's involvement in the Hollywood film about her illustrious, but too short, career.

The members of the *J. Clark Band,* Nashville agents, Tommy Taylor, Nelson Wood and many other local purveyors of top quality traditional country music joined the Saturday morning think tank as the Ypsi Opry concept grew. *Bluefield,* a pure, authentic traditional group of the period and style, has become the 'house band' for the occasion. Other artists are still being booked for the event, described as ripe for promotion in Depot Town.

D.T.A. president, Tom Dodd, said, "We've had all our eggs in the jazz basket too long. We've got to diversify. Good country ought to be even easier to sell than good jazz in this old neighborhood."

Whereas, Bonni Rosen, the Association's coordinator of volunteers, said, "We can't count on the same pool of volunteer workers to spread themselves even further for an event of this magnitude. I'm looking for lots of helpers on this one — because it could prove popular enough to grow into another *series* of musical events next year. The country crowd is both loyal and enthusiastic. I hope we can find them on our many committees to make this event happen right."

Carolyn McKeever, known for the jazz entrepreneurism and chair of D.T.A.'s budget and events committee, said, "Our neighborhood promotional format has proven to be terribly effective. We're just focusing on a new dimension. Depot Town is a gorgeous mix of antiques, food and entertainment. We're expanding and improving all the time — with an eye on top-of-the-line quality for our loyal clientele. A celebration of traditional country music is just what we need to continue our steady growth and artistic believeability."

Watch the May edition of *The Depot Town Rag* for complete details of how Depot Town will help us truly celebrate a most vital part of our community's heritage.

"Ypsitucky" never sounded so good! Just wait 'til you hear it on May 28th!

Olde Towne
Coin & Gold

24 E. CROSS STREET
YPSILANTI, MI 48198

(313) 483-6155

Ypsilanti's
Farmers' Market
in historic Depot Town

Every Wed. & Sat.
8 a.m. — 3 p.m.

'People moved'

It was just two years ago that *The Rag* proposed to Detroit's Mayor Coleman Young, that he abandon the idea of spending what turned out to be $203 million on a nearly three-mile-long elevated tourist train and let us install all that concrete in Ypsilanti (and buy a taxi for every citizen of the City of Detroit with the money saved).

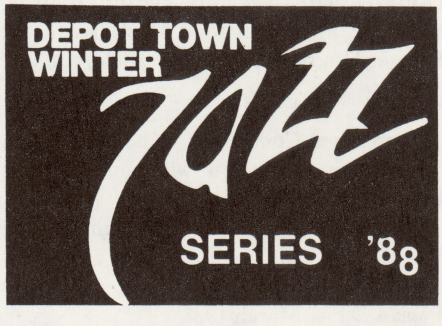
We're still thinking about this novel concept, and suggest the following route for a future Ypsilanti people Mover.

— Radisson Hotel
— Gault Village Shopping Center
— Ecorse Road district
— East Michigan Avenue/downtown
— Depot Town
— Eastern Michigan University
— EMU Stadium/McAuley Health Center
— West Michigan Avenue/EMU College of Business
— Harriet Street (maybe a shopping center someday?)
— Radisson Hotel

How's that for a circle through a vital community? Trace it on a map. In one station less that Detroit's system, we've made connections just as exciting. Maybe more so!

The Corner Health Center is moving!

Since 1981 it has been providing low cost medical services of 12 to 21 year olds and their children at the old Ypsilanti High School. In its first six years The Corner's patient visits have increased over ten times from, 360 in it first year to over 4100 in its last fiscal year. Therefore, it will be moving into its own building with over twice as much space at 47 N. Huron where it will continue to serve its old patients and will also accept new patients. Renovations at the new facility include: four medical examination rooms, two counseling offices and a laboratory. The Corner will also continue to provide health education for its patients and the community through its Teen Parent Peer Education Program and The Corner Theatre Troupe. The Corner would like to thank the community for its support during its first six years and is excited about receiving continued support while it grows into its new facility -GOOD HEALTH *IS* JUST AROUND THE CORNER!



City Radiator
110 North River 483-2248

YPSILANTI RECYCLING PROJECT
651 Rice Street
(just north of the Farmers' Market in Ypsilanti's historic Depot Town
Open every Saturday
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Collecting newspaper, glass, used motor oil and ferrous cans
A non-profit organization

Hon's
Flowers & Fancies
46 East Cross 482-2124

Miller's SINCE 1896
ICE CREAM
Open All Year!
42 E. CROSS
HISTORIC DEPOT TOWN

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Vitamins, Herbs, Nutritional Suppliments
9 East Cross • 485-2711

Pronto Pizza
Pizza & Subs
37 East Cross • 483-4555

Jim MacDonald's Antiques
Apple Annie's
Vintage Clothing
29 East Cross • 481-0555

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Men and Women of iron Down in Depot Town

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CUSTOM FRAMING
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A Blend of Past & Present
With an Eye on The Future
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The Grand Trunk, Ltd.
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15 East Cross 485-4994

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WHOLE NATURAL FOOD IN BULK OR SMALL QUANTITIES
M.T.Th.F. 10-7 Wed. 10-9 312 N. River
483-1520 Sat. 9-7 Sun. 12-5

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